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Director Says CIA Is Easy Target

By JOELL LANG

George Bush, director of the CIA, said Tuesday in Hartford the CIA has become an "easy headline" for the media and has been seriously harmed by news leaks and irresponsible reporting.

Bush agreed that the CIA overstepped its bounds in certain covert actions abroad and in intelligence gathering here, but he said that did not justify the "denigration" heaped on it by certain media.

He said he was deeply shaken by the assassination of a CIA agent in Greece, Richard Welch, a few weeks after Welch was identified in a radical newspaper. Welch was a classics scholar trained at Harvard and a fine man, Bush told about 100 area business executives gathered in the Tower Suite of the Hartford Insurance Group.

Members of the Executive Forum of the World Affairs Center, they heard Bush say blown covers, like Welch's, have placed CIA agents around the world in danger. Bush's speech was made off the record, but he later cleared it for publication.

A former chairman of the Republican National Committee and until last January, chief of the liaison of-

fice in the People's Republic of China, Bush said he approved the checks placed on the CIA by President Ford.

But he said Congress should consolidate its committees that now oversee intelligence operations. In only nine months he has made 40 official appearances before one committee or another, he said.

Bush also said "senseless disclosures" hurt the government's intelligence efforts and said secrecy must remain a part of certain CIA activities. He said he favored legislation making it illegal for a government employee to "leak" classified information.

At the meeting he read what he said was a direct quote from a telegram received Tuesday from a top official in a foreign country. The official said his trust in dealing with the United States could be undermined by news leaks by American officials.

"Foreign governments may wonder whether we will ever be able to hold on to intelligence secrets and are reluctant to share their own protected information which is often needed to supplement our knowledge," said Bush.